

Striking A New Chord

Janie Berry becomes director of The Villages Choralettes.

By MICHAEL FORTUNA
Daily Sun Staff Writer

THE VILLAGES Anita Misso has passed the baton to a new director of The Villages Choralettes.

It's going to someone the group already knows: Janie Berry, the women's chorus' assistant director. "I got promoted," Berry said.

Misso, who is moving to Cape Coral to be with her daughter and son-in-law, has directed the group for 12 years.

"I think that's long enough," said Misso, of the Village Rio Grande. "Time for new blood."

Berry held her first rehearsal with some of the singers Friday afternoon at her home in the Village of Glenbrook. She wanted to get a head start on the rehearsal process, practicing with a core group of about 10 people, including a pianist and flutist.

"It's been going great," Berry said. "They're caring. They have a ball. It's a nice way to meet people, too."

Barbara Popin, who was playing the baby grand piano, thinks the extra rehearsals are a good thing. "The more time, the better," said Popin, of the Village Santo Domingo.

Berry has been serving as the Choralettes' assistant director for the past couple of years.

"She was the most likely to do it," Misso said. "It does make a difference (finding someone already in the group). They're used to her directing. I think it's in capable hands."

Misso announced the change during the group's luncheon in May.

"It's mixed emotions," Misso said. "It's hard to let go. The girls are all friends. We've gone through a lot together."

But Misso isn't walking away completely from the group. She may return in the fall to sing with the chorus, which should be back to full strength when the snowbirds return beginning in September.

Berry hopes to add a bit of variety to the group's program, including adding the flute and bells to the lineup.

"We had kids singing in the last few concerts, and they were amazing," Berry said.

Berry also is trying something new to aid in learning the songs. She hopes to use a computer program that allows the singers to hear their particular part louder than the rest. The songs can be put on a CD so the singers can practice at home.

"She's very good," Popin said. "I'm looking forward to a good year with her. She knows her stuff."

Berry should know her stuff. She spent more than 50 years teaching elementary, middle and high school students the ways of singing.

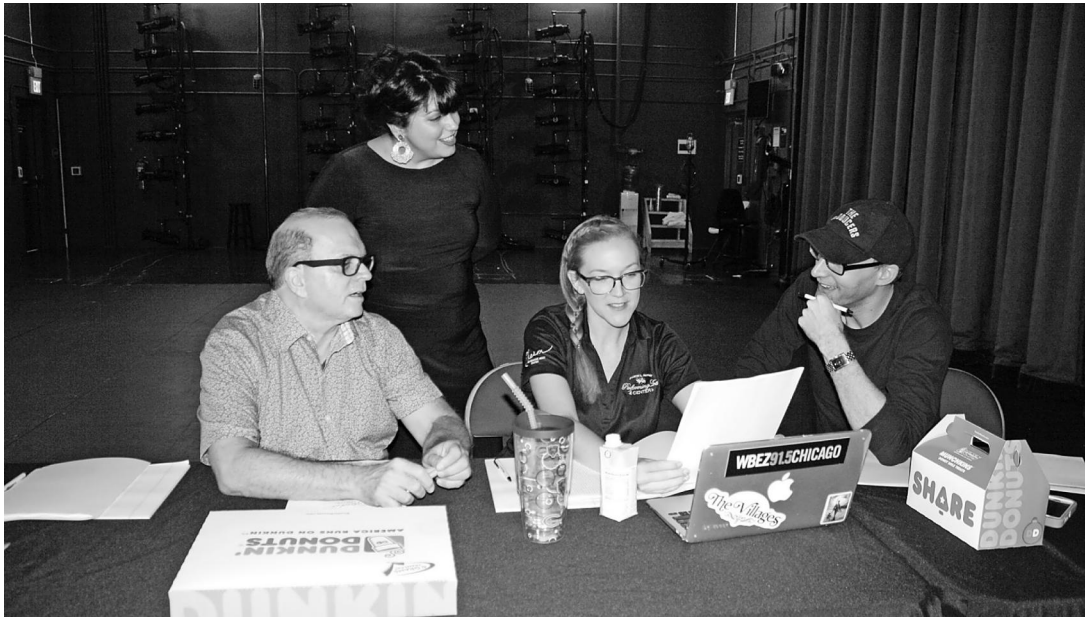
While in Georgia, she found a way to get some 750 of her choral students involved in a Christmas program.

During the last two years of her professional career in Palm Beach County, she taught music as therapy to mentally disabled students.

One of her choruses sang the score to the musical "Oklahoma!" and put out a record.

"That was fun," Berry said.

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Michael Fortuna | Daily Sun

Gary Powell, from left, Aradhana Tiawari, Whitney Morse and Trevin Cooper go over what they'll be doing for the audition process Sunday at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. More than 90 actors and actresses came through to audition for the Studio Theatre's inaugural season, beginning in November.

They Hope They Got It

The Studio Theatre holds auditions for inaugural season at The Sharon.

By MICHAEL FORTUNA
Daily Sun Staff Writer

THE VILLAGES They have the plays.

Next on the list: Finding the actors to populate those plays.

Those involved with The Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol held a marathon 12-hour audition session Sunday at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center to select the best actors.

Aradhana Tiwari, Gary Powell, Whitney Morse and Trevin Cooper saw more than 100 people throughout the day, with the first round of auditions running from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., followed by call-backs from 6 to 10 p.m.

"The auditions went awesome," Morse said. "We saw so many great people."

The actors, which were brought in groups of 10, were asked to sing a short selection of music or recite a monologue. If they were asked back, they read scenes from the plays they were being considered for.

Those plays for the

upcoming season, beginning in November, are the musicals "Next to Normal" and "The Last Five Years," and the plays "Private Lives" and "Proof."

"A lot of theaters work this way, where you have a season general audition," Morse said. "Are they the right type for X, Y or Z play? Someone may come in and you think, 'Oh my gosh, you look like just what I imagined in my head.' You hope for that to happen, you hope for someone to be perfect, to solve all your problems."

"We have X-number of puzzle pieces we need to find," Morse said. "Each person is a unique puzzle piece, and you hope to fit them in together."

Tiwari will direct "Next to Normal," while Powell will be the musical director. Cooper will direct "Private Lives" and "Proof." Morse was there to offer her opinion on the actors.

"It's a collaborative process," Morse said. "You cannot do it by yourself. We all are going to talk to each other, weigh the pros and cons of each audition."

Now that this portion of the audition process is finished, Morse said the next step is send out offers to those who fit the right puzzle

opening.

Letting actors know they didn't make the cut wasn't fun, but it is a part of being in the theater world.

"You go out for a lot of auditions," Morse said. "You can't get every job. It's not possible. I've been to more auditions than the jobs I've gotten."

Morse found the audition day to be informative.

"It's nice to say hello to the local theater community," she said. "It's really cool to meet so many new artists, to get an idea of what the theater culture is like there."

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Top Tony Moments: Miranda's Tearful Sonnet, Corden's Antics

By JOCELYN NOVECK
The Associated Press

NEW YORK

As presenter Barbra Streisand noted, Tony night was "tinged with sorrow" — and she wasn't the only one making reference to the horrific Orlando shootings during the ceremony. But the night was also a celebration of the power of theater to bring joy. And there was much joy for the cast and creators of the wildly popular "Hamilton," which won a whopping 11 Tonys.

A look at some of the night's top moments, both onstage and off:

A SEARING SONNET

"Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, the eloquent hero of this Broadway season, is known for giving acceptance speeches in freestyling rap. But on this night, he told the crowd upon winning best score, he opted to read a sonnet instead, addressed to his wife. His own tears over the Orlando tragedy were infectious, as he spoke of "when senseless acts of tragedy remind us that nothing is promised, not one day." But, he added: "Hope and love last longer, and

love is love is love is love is love is love is love is love, cannot be killed or swept aside..."

THE LOOK OF DIVERSITY

For all the talk about diversity and inclusiveness this season (absent at the Oscars, present at the Tonys), nothing could beat one powerful image: all four of the musical-acting winners were black actors. "Think of tonight as the Oscars, but with diversity," host James Corden had said at the beginning of the show. "It's so diverse that Donald Trump has threatened to build a wall around this theater."

CORDEN'S BROADWAY CRED

Speaking of Corden: After his own somber opening referring to Orlando — a piece he prerecorded to be sure to get it right — the late-night TV host delighted the crowd with an ode to what seemed like dozens of past Broadway shows, from "Les Miserables" to "The Phantom of the Opera" to "Sweeney Todd" to "Grease." And hey, there's no easier way to win over a theater-loving audience than to sing a few bars from "Rose's Turn" in "Gypsy."

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